When action becomes natural, it ceases to weigh on us.
—VINOBA BHAVE

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THE SOUL'S EXILE AND RETURN

BY himself, a man is little more than a lost and bewildered fragment of consciousness, both subject and object of endless changes in the flow of universal life. At times he thinks he has found a stable floor of reality, but then the great kaleidoscope turns, presenting what seem entirely new shapes of experience. There is no place of rest in all the great expanse, no certain mooring for the wandering monad. All, all is shifting, and even the lights he sees by change.

There is, we say, the self and its vehicles—naught else. Take refuge, it is taught, in the self, not in the vehicles. But our life, and the passage of events, are in the vehicles. It is not the self but the soul that has committed itself to this vast Odyssey. It is not the self, but the soul, that needs help.

It is the soul who has set out on an ambivalent quest. Now looking in, but more often out, trying to penetrate the translucent layers, the "veil upon veil" of its environment, the soul becomes forlorn. What shall it gain by cleaving to the Self? The Self is Absolute Substance. It has no history. It simply is. The self is not becoming; it knows no becoming, which is the Icarus flight, the ascendancy and fall of the soul. The soul is caught in the mystery of cycles, enwrapped by the folds of time and made a creature of all the relativities of manifested being. It is the soul who is lost in the endless flux of existence, not the self. The self cannot be lost.

What is wanted is a science of the wanderings of the soul. The soul has a history—a past and a future; and the soul looks back with memory and forward by its image-making skill. The Self is one, and has the secret of ineffable peace and unlonging rest in the stuff of its own omnipresent reality. How could the soul, which is forever in motion, ever find this secret out? Is it possible, is it conceivable, that the secret of the Self is somehow hidden in the secret places of the soul? Or is it, more than likely, that the quest of the soul to find the Self is as vain a pursuit as the moth's self-immolating fury to merge with the flame?

But what is the soul's own genius, its great and unique possession? The soul, indeed, has a history, which the self has not. The soul has in it all the wonder and promise of the morning star. The soul has a Promethean errand; it goes to the Himalayan heights and touches the bottom of the deepest sea. It knows the notion of limit; it is continually wounding itself on the sharp edges of finite being. Each life lived by the soul adds to the library of penetrated and exhausted illusions. The gamut of pain, the moment of ecstasy, the sluggish flow of hours—these are known by the soul.

And out of it all come the sacred annals of the soul's explorations. So are wrought the scriptures which inform the scroll of time with the logos of meaning. The hosts of souls compose the history of the world from their own self-erected egoity. And so there are in the world the rising melody and tumultuous chords of the song of life, and many anthems of meaning.

The silent self within the soul is the key to the melody of this song. The uncaptured infinite is always there, pervading the time-born sequence of sound. The heard potency is somehow the miraculous child of the unborn, infinite potentiality. The soul knows this, yet does not and can never know it. But in the moment when it sings along with the universal voice, it has an instant of divine content. It is in these cycle-transcending moments that the soul finds reference points for universal history. The meaning of history lies in the movement of growing intelligence from apex to apex of the cycles. A cycle known to the very last inch of its manifested essence is a cycle dissolved, a shadow gone forever from the screen of time. Its substance has been transmuted into the tissue of the soul's understanding. The cycle's meaning is now ineffaceably recorded in the soul's microcosmic links with its own past—the *known* portion of the universe. By such transactions of experience, the soul becomes

a mirror of the cycles—a brightly burnished monad—and the man becomes a universal man.

What remains for other men to consult is the record, the story of the world, the universal history of the peregrinations of all souls, until that time; and it is here, in this history, this *teaching,* that the newly wandering monad finds guidance on his way. Thus each wanderer takes up conscious brotherhood in the great fraternity of souls, and learns his place and part in the mundane symmetry. And so the many-layered wilderness of experience becomes a path that has been known before by others, who are many; and what was a labyrinth without light or ending becomes a measurable course of subjective discovery, with intervals and markings to show its order and its law. The world is no more a chaos, but a cosmos built of materials and in stages studied by the soul.

The Silent Self Within

Seek within thyself the solution of all the problems, even those which thou thinkest most material and external.

Within thyself is the secret always; within thyself are all the secrets.

Even in order to open for thyself a path through the virgin forest, even to build a wall, even to stretch a bridge, thou must first seek within thyself the secret.

Within thyself already are all the bridges stretched out.

Within thyself are cut already the underbrush and the cloying vines that close the way.

All the architectural structures are already standing within thyself.

Ask the hidden architect: he will give thee all his specifications.

Before going to seek the sharpest ax, the strongest pick, the most serviceable spade, enter within thyself and ask. . . .

And thou shalt know the essential part of all the problems, and the best of all the formulas will be shown to thee, and thou shalt be given the strongest of all tools.

And thou shalt succeed constantly, since within thyself thou bearest the mysterious light of all the secrets.

—Amado Nervo

ON FIRST ACQUAINTANCE— "THE SECRET DOCTRINE"

XV

> It is a universal tradition that, before the physiological "Fall," propagation of one's kind, whether human or animal, took place through the WILL of the Creators, or of their progeny. It was the Fall of Spirit into generation, not the Fall of mortal man. It has already been stated that, to become a Self-Conscious Spirit, the latter must pass through every cycle of being, culminating in its highest point on earth in Man. Spirit *per se* is an unconscious negative ABSTRACTION. Its purity is inherent, not acquired by merit; hence, as already shown, to become the highest Dhyan Chohan it is necessary for each Ego to attain to full self-consciousness as a human, i.e., conscious Being, which is synthesized for us in Man. (*The Secret Doctrine* I, 192-3.)

THUS, we call ourselves humans, yet most of us may be mostly asleep, far from the perfection of fully self-conscious man awake in each of his principles. As we realize that the war and passion, the confusion and incredible lack of purpose, displayed in the environment are an *honest mirror* of our inner life, then the sacred character and immense importance of our mental images may sink more deeply into our consciousness.

And if this is so, then individual reform becomes primary to any change. That most reforms in the outer world circle back and erase themselves proves their extrinsic character. It is as if children were to try to alter their image reflected upon still water by throwing stones into the water.

We might say that the individual, by taking the lead, becomes a bridge by which others may cross their next personal abyss. No man works alone, however isolated his singleness may seem; depth and strength for the Individual Ego may well be gathered at the daybreak of a manvantara just as we gather force from all life around us at the awakening of day, for the need of experience and work to be done. When "dusk" arrives, the Ego does not fall into non-existence. At such a time one might say equally of IT and the body: "It is and is not."

It is all right, we suppose, to make such statements as:

> For a knower of *Brahman,* there is no wealth comparable to the sense of oneness, the sense of equality, truthfulness, virtue, steadfastness, non-injury, integrity and withdrawal from all activities. (*The Principal Upanishads,* S. Radhakrishnan translations, p. 275.)

An era dominated by commerce and war may put a very different meaning on the phrase "withdrawal from all activities" than one led by the idea "know thyself." With the warlike or the man of commerce there may arise the idea that ceasing action is to cease outward activity, or with thinkers of such an era they might be a little more subtle and consider it passivity of the thinking processes.

However, there is another way of looking at this, which is obvious and logical if we place our idea of reality inward. If we face inward —toward the Unknown—in order to gain a sense of Duty, the *Decision-Maker* within is withdrawn from all activity, yet becomes a pivot from which new activity can begin.

There is what might be called an "Inner-facing" hierarchy of values. Their excellence is in being an *excellent image* and not in themselves *per se*. The protagonist seems to have ceased having a life of his own, as if this visible physical life had begun to be useful only in association with a future something else. For everyone there comes a time when he feels he must live "for something," that if he is not dedicated to something beyond visible life he is not really alive at all. And there are "living dead men" whose only effect is to further differentiation and separation. As S. Radhakrishnan's commentary on *The Upanishads* says:

> There are no gods or demons other than men. If they are lacking in self-control while endowed with other good qualities, they are gods; if they are particularly greedy they are men; if they are cruel and given to inflicting injury on others, they are demons. Men themselves are distinguished into these three classes. . . .
>
> Gautama the Buddha is described as the embodiment of compassion, *karuna,* and non-injury, *ahimsa.* . . .
>
> Which shall I first extol, you or the great compassion by which you are held so long in samsara, though knowing its faults so well?
>
> You have affection even for the hostile, benevolence even to the fallen, tenderness even to the cruel, wonderful is your greatness.
>
> You overcame the revilers by forbearance, the malicious by blessing, the slanderers by truth, the wicked by kindness.

> The three injunctions require us to go about doing good even though we find ourselves in a world of evil. Self-control is necessary for we must not be elated by success or deterred by failure. *Daya* or compassion is more than sympathy or intellectual and emotional feeling. It is love in action, fellowship in suffering. It is feeling as one's own the circumstances and aspirations to self-perfection which we find in others. The practice of these virtues will preserve, promote and enhance the values of life.

The *here and now* aspect of reformation by each from the flower of his own efforts may be sensed in this passage. We see that the need and possibility of self-transformation is not yesterday or tomorrow, but in the grasp of each moment. The triad of self-control, poverty and compassion, can penetrate into our nature. If, by this triad, for instance, we mean the controlled distribution or sacrifice of our life in a context of love, one need not stop at the superficial or visible, but seek to apply "reformation" to the mind-life. Then the "outer" may become a revealer rather than a reviler of the universal.

Perhaps we know only the smallest fragment of ourselves; we are "the earth and all these lives" to the extent that we seek a synthesis inside our mind. Who knows but what we might learn to laugh and cry with the Movement and forget how to laugh and cry for ourselves? If intelligent sacrifice is the opposite of coercion, and if the sense of abstract love can generate the drive that no personality can thwart—not even our own—who knows? If we should become so immersed in the Cause for which H.P.B. and Mr. Judge are the Voice and Heart, the way to living inside a *Larger Life* might unfold. We might be delighted to use the body-and-personality as a mask in order to help nature in the same way that devotees build a temple—not to worship it, but to use it and wear it out; its value lies in its instrumental facility for *something else* and not in itself *per se*.

If there are Beings that re-present the higher elements of this focus of knowledge-filled devotion, can we not see how deep our responsibility is to learn to follow in their footsteps? Others follow ours whether we like it or not. Would we have them follow us into the dregs of life, into the abyss of personality and leadership? What is wrong with personality and leadership? Nothing, except that the journey of consciousness is no longer passing by.

If we were to imagine time as ONE THING *seen in three ways,* and if, further, we thought of all that lay to the rear of active self-

conscious experience as instrumental and that which looms ahead as the "striving-to-embody" for the Monad in its journey of conscious evolution, then we can see how personal life and its pursuits are a perversion of consciousness, not because of any inherent evil, but because it is not in touch with the cycles of spiritual time.

This is not to say that personal desire may not have played its role. Maybe we needed ambition before we could encompass the idea of making of our lives a shrine for Beings which are both ourselves and not ourselves at the same time; finally comes desire to see this earth move on, to leave it better than it was when we arrived.

It is here that a vow or promise has value, setting the goal, the pattern of a given cycle. By such a personal, self-devised commitment we turn the psychic mind into the service of the Higher, that needs no vows.

If we saw a work which seemed highly valuable to the race, and if we saw others bent upon this task, would there not be good reason for a commitment, not just to the Work as a hypothesis, but to the Movement, the humble vehicle of the Effort? This would not make us sectarian but would simply be a recognition that we join with others having a similar aim and purpose.

It would seem that finding this best or most comprehensive nature within us is locked up in our ability to live for the environment as if it were ourself, to make the personal life a calculated sacrificial victim for our best ideals. That is to say, since we cannot do away with personal incarnated existence, then we must do something *with* it.

There arises a *certain time* when we can no longer avoid awakening to a sense of the universal and must choose how we are to serve.

YOUTH FORUM

Far beneath the anxious or the smiling surface of our normal lives, so far indeed sometimes that we ourselves do not suspect it, there exists in many of us (not all, no doubt, for some of us must be sane) a kind of disaffection, a dark and subtle self-contempt. But if men are really immortal, and potential gods, as Theosophy has declared, why should such feelings exist at all—or at any rate, so deeply?

The question could be dismissed as postured if it weren't also so widely pertinent. Clearly, anyone inclined to believe in the potential divinity of mankind can hardly help experiencing a deep and bitter disappointment in himself when he sees how compromised, perhaps comfortable but incredibly petty, a life he is leading. And of course anyone who is not inclined to believe in that divinity has only to look closely in a mirror at the dying flesh he thinks himself to be, in order to become filled with self-questioning. And we who would like to be considered Theosophists have the uncomfortable privilege of being subjected at once to both these motivations for self-disgust, since most of us feel an absolute certainty about very few things indeed, and dwell mainly in that vague and precarious region which lies between ignorance and knowledge. Thus it may be possible for us to think of ourselves as immortal souls, and at times even to sense this truth strongly, yet spend most of our waking consciousness (often even our consciousness in dreams) mulling over bodily and worldly concerns.

The French philosopher Gabriel Marcel declares: "The ego is without any doubt faced with a dilemma to fulfill itself or to escape. Where it does not attain fulfillment, it is only conscious of itself as of an unendurable gaping void from which it must seek protection at any price." Most human beings no doubt have some sense of this dilemma, but it would seem that for Theosophists the dilemma could be particularly acute, since as a rule they do not *want* to escape, yet find themselves none the less hemmed about with obstacles to their inner fulfillment. The tendency, it seems, would

therefore be strong to despair and feel ourselves self-betrayed, for surely, we would think, there is no credible excuse for an immortal essence to remain so completely the prisoner of its personality's limitations. We *want* to *create*—but cannot.

The temptation to fall into this sort of despair is very great, for it is one of the two most obvious ways of shunting around our obligation to *become* creators. The other way, of course, is to use Theosophy as a filter or sweetener for life's stark and bitter realities—using it, that is, as an excuse to "philosophize" in a bad sense, and thereby assure ourselves that our powers will develop in the course of time, over a number of lifetimes, and that we must bear with our present mediocrity, trusting in the Law and in the maturing-process of time. Such "philosophizing," of course, involves misconstruing Theosophy for the purpose of self-protection, as does the indulgence in despair, which permits us to feel: Well at least I tried. I cried out in the night. I wept with frustration and self-despisal at my limitations. I am truly a sufferer.

All this is not to say that the despair is not real, or that it is not a terrible thing to experience; but it does seem possible for it to become an indulgence or a dodge from life if the effort is not at once made to throw it off—to devise new and more devious strategems for recapturing our inner "kingdoms" than such hopeless frontal assaults.

To pursue this same image of war, we must learn to distinguish the traitors within our own ranks, a kind of inner conspiracy one might say, of which one of the ringleaders is just this despair we have been speaking of. Some words of Henry Miller's may illustrate:

> Every day we slaughter our finest impulses. That is why we get a heart-ache when we read those lines written by the hand of a master and recognize them as our own, as the tender shoots which we stifled because we lacked the faith to believe in our own powers, our own criterion of truth and beauty. Every man, when he gets quiet, when he becomes desperately honest with himself, is capable of uttering profound truths. We all derive from the same source. There is no mystery about the origin of things. We are all part of creation, all kings, all poets, all musicians: we have only to open up, only to discover what is already there.

This is of course what Theosophy has been telling us all along. Yet why have we so often only half believed it (for if we believed it

fully, we could never despair—we would be too busy living)? No, there seems to be something subtly attractive and tempting about such passionate despair, such hatred. At this point it may be helpful to examine etymologies. Says E. R. Dodds in *The Greeks and the Irrational*: "The Greek had always felt the experience of passion as something mysterious and frightening, the experience of a force that was in him, possessing him, rather than possessed by him. The very word *pathos* testifies to that: like its Latin equivalent *passio,* it means something that 'happens to' a man, something of which he is the passive victim." From this account it may be possible to infer that the attraction of self-disdain may have its origin in a subtle form of self-love, for it involves an indulgence of self, a sense of separation from others, a taking of one's little self with terrible seriousness, and in fact a placing of more importance on one's own failure than upon one's deepest duties of love towards other human beings.

What is the opposite of this feeling, and is it attainable? One possible answer to these questions, of course, is the old answer: that we are all brothers, and that Life is One. But if we understood the implications of that simple statement, we would no doubt feel a sudden flood of relief, as though the dykes set up by fear and the secretly cherished limitations which had protected us from life and joy so long (since that joy demanded our self-sacrifice) had now at last begun to weaken, to slip off their foundations, pushed by the force of our rising love—that is, by the force of all life, for it is no lesser a source that we have tapped. It is just a subtle shift in attitude that makes all the difference, the difference between feeling ourselves to be the prisoner of the body and feeling ourselves the *life* of the body, between feeling our smallness and feeling life's greatness. Such an attitude, of course, is difficult to communicate to others, if they are not on the lookout for it, for it is a completely internal shift and may entail no obvious change in our outward appearance. As Miller elsewhere states:

> How can you make another person understand what is really happening inside you? If I were to break a leg he would drop everything. But if your heart is breaking with joy—well, it's a bit boring, don't you know. Tears are easier to put up with than joy. Joy is destructive: It makes others uncomfortable. Weep and you weep alone—what a lie that is! Weep and you will find a million crocodiles to weep with you. The world is forever weeping. The world is drenched in tears. Laughter, that's an-

> other thing. Laughter is momentary—it passes. But joy, joy is a kind of ecstatic bleeding, a disgraceful sort of super-contentment which overflows from every pore of your being. You can't make people joyous just by being joyous yourself. Joy has to be generated by oneself: it is or it isn't. Joy is founded on reasons too profound to be understood and communicated. To be joyous is to be a madman in a world of sad ghosts. . . .

It is perhaps paradoxical, but certainly wonderful, that we may find the confidence to be fearlessly alive, move swiftly and in large gestures, and laugh strongly whenever we feel like it, only when we are humble—humble enough, that is, to rely on the infinite mystery inherent in life rather than on our own mere personalities.

(*To be continued*)

THE HUMAN POTENTIAL

The problem of morality is again different when we believe that inherent in man are evolutionary constructive forces, which urge him to realize his given potentialities. This belief does not mean that man is essentially good—which would presuppose a given knowledge of what is good or bad. It means that man, by his very nature and of his own accord, strives toward self-realization, and that his set of values evolves from such striving. Apparently he cannot, for example, develop his full human potentialities unless he is truthful to himself; unless he is active and productive; unless he relates himself to others in the spirit of mutuality. . . . He can grow, in the true sense, only if he assumes responsibility for himself.

We arrive thus at a *morality of evolution,* in which the criterion for what we cultivate or reject in ourselves lies in the question: is a particular attitude or drive inducive or obstructive to my human growth? As the frequency of neuroses shows, all kinds of pressure can easily divert our constructive energies into unconstructive or destructive channels. But, with such a belief in an autonomous striving toward self-realization, we do not need an inner strait jacket with which to shackle our spontaneity, nor the whip of inner dictates to drive us to perfection. . . . Self-knowledge is not an aim in itself, but a means of liberating the forces of spontaneous growth.

—KAREN HORNEY

MISUNDERSTOOD BIBLICAL TRADITIONS

Miracles—III

IT is far easier to brand as "devils" those with whom one happens to disagree than to seek out and correct the errors of one's own mind. On Sept. 7, 1960, The New York *Times* reported discovery in the Leningrad Library of an apparently uncensored fragment of the old Hebraic Talmud. This volume, along with other copies of the same book, has been found to contain references to a certain "magician" who lived around the beginning of our era, and which some authorities believe to refer to none other than Jesus himself. This account was summarized in *FACT* (July-Aug., 1964):

> Jeshu Hanotzri [Jesus of Nazareth] goeth forth to be stoned because he practiced magic and deceived and led astray Israel.
>
> His mother was called Miriam [Mary] . . . He called himself God, also the Son of Man, and said he would go up to heaven.
>
> Jeshu, called Hanotzri, Ben Stada, or Ben Pandira . . . sinned and caused the multitude to sin. He was tainted with heresy . . . He was a revolutionary . . . brought magic from Egypt . . . was a magician.
>
> On the eve of Passover they hanged Jeshu Hanotzri . . . at the time of his death 33 years old.

Whether these statements actually refer to Jesus or not, we shall probably never know. Nor does the question seem to be of great importance, for in neither case do they alter in any degree the value of the Sermon on the Mount. The statements do serve, however, to remind us of the fact that the brands we place upon our great of Soul—whether they are labeled "heretic," "magician," "sorcerer," or "Son of God and Righteousness"—almost always depend upon who it is that does the labeling. Have not great men in all ages been slandered and abused simply because the views they espoused were not at the time in popular esteem? Is it not a fact that outspoken individuals even in our own day are oftentimes looked upon by opposing parties as veritable "devils in the flesh?" Was there ever a time, for that matter, when the news of the day, or the words of public figures, have not been "slanted," as we say, to fit prejudices?

The Simonians, according to the Bible, were a large and influential group with extensive writings on both religion and philosophy. Why is it that none of this literature is extant? How does it happen that all we know of this ancient tradition is the little that is recorded in the prejudiced, half-fantastic *Writings of the Church Fathers—Ante and Post Nicene?* Early Christian bias and brutality seem evident from the fact that, almost without exception, every devoted individual or group determined to preserve its own spiritual integrity —that refused, in other words, to accept the dicta of the growing Church—was forthwith labeled "heretic." Impartial observers are forced to the conclusion that, from Clement to Epiphanius and Justinian, the Fathers of ecclesiastical Christianity have presented to the Western world an overwhelmingly one-sided view of history. It is for this reason, no doubt, that the only estimation our age possesses of even the greatest of Pagan philosophers is that of "infidel" or "atheist."

The Theosophist's plea for re-evaluation of the life and character of Simon Magus is based upon the belief that neither the Bible nor any historical account justifies the total condemnation to which he has been subjected. Even if Simon was a "sorcerer" before the arrival of Philip, Peter, and John in the land of Samaria, is there any evidence that he continued the practice *after* baptism? Assuming that he did offer money for the purchase of spiritual gifts, was his motive for doing so an evil one? "Give me also this power," he said, "that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost." Of course Peter said that Simon's heart was bitter and that he was caught up in bonds of "iniquity." And for some, Peter's uncontested word would be sufficient. But Jesus warned against trying to judge the heart of another. And for those who have become acquainted with the *historical* Peter, as portrayed by Clement, who know something of his avowed enmity toward Simon, and of the heated disputes between the two, it becomes exceedingly difficult to determine whose was the bitter heart, Simon's or Peter's!

In *Recognitions* and *Homilies,* Peter constantly refers to Simon as his "enemy" or "adversary." Employing what he calls the "rule of combination," by which process *good,* he said, must be preceded by *evil,* light by darkness, and health by disease, Simon, in this sense, he contends, preceded himself, and is therefore "a fellow-worker of error and deceit":

> Since, then, as I said, some men do not know the rule of

> combination, thence they do not know who is my precursor Simon. For if he were known, he would not be believed; but now, not being known, he is improperly believed; and though his deeds are those of a hater, he is loved; and though an enemy, he is received as a friend; and though he be death, he is desired as a saviour; and though fire, he is esteemed light; and though a deceiver, he is believed as a speaker of truth.
>
> Then I Clement, when I heard this, said, "Who then, I pray you, is this who is such a deceiver? I should like to be informed." Then said Peter; "If you wish to learn, it is in your power to know it from those from whom I also got accurate information on all points respecting him." (*Homilies* II, xviii.)

Peter's "accurate information," it should be noted, came to him from Aquila and Nicetas, two youthful defectors from Simon's School, who had been "educated from their boyhood with Simon Magus, and learned all things concerning him. For such was their friendship, that they were associated with him in all things in which he wished to unite with them" (*Homilies* II, xx). The accuracy of "information" of this kind has always been held in doubt, is it not true, by men of honor and good sense? For who would trust the reliability of "news" spread abroad by former friends who have turned enemy?

Interesting character side-lights on the apostle are furnished, apparently unwittingly, in the *Clementines,* where Peter, with his wife and disciples, is shown pursuing Simon from city to city for the purpose of exposing the latter and undoing his work. In *Homilies* (Book II, ch. xxxvii), which is entitled "Spies in the enemy's Camp," Clement said it was Peter's practice, on the eve of debate with Simon, to send secret agents into the latter's quarters to learn what his adversary planned to say on the following day—the purpose being, he says, that he may be able to cope with this man of wickedness. A robust faith this, that the Vicar of Christ, first Pope of Rome, should feel it necessary to spy on his enemy in order to be able to hold his ground in debate! But in Peter's own words:

> Some of our people attend feignedly upon Simon as companions, as if they were persuaded by his most atheistic error, in order that they may learn his purpose and disclose it to us, so that we may be able to encounter this terrible man on favourable terms. And now I have learned from them what arguments he is going to employ in the discussion. . . . I wish you to know that those who, according to our arrangement, associate with Simon that they may learn his intentions, and submit them to us, so that

> we may be able to cope with his variety of wickedness, these men have sent to me, and informed me that Simon today is, as he arranged, prepared to come before all, and show from the Scriptures that He who made heaven and the earth, and all things in them, is not the Supreme God, but that there is another, unknown and supreme, as being in an unspeakable manner God of gods . . . (*Homilies* II, xxx; III, ii.)

The controversies between Peter and Simon comprise several hundred pages—ninety percent of which are devoted to the words of Peter, ten percent to Simon. Through it all, the chief bone of contention is the question posed above, whether there be One God or many, whether the "framer of heaven and earth" is the most High God, or not. Simon, with the Buddhists, Brahmans, Gnostics and Theosophists, held that the vengeful, jealous God of the Old Testament is *not* the Most High God—nor is he the "Father in Heaven," spoken of and worshipped by Jesus. To accept such an idea, according to Theosophy, would be equivalent to believing that the personal *Manas,* or the lower Mind—the creating, "framing," part of man's nature—is his Highest Self, or *Atma,* the Spirit, which it is not. According to Genesis, Man is "the image of God," or as the Gnostics and mediaeval Kabalists would put it: He is the Microcosm of the Macrocosm. Since, by looking within, Man is seen to be a *Unity,* although exhibiting outwardly a diversity of spiritual, intellectual and physical constituents—why should it be difficult to understand that, correspondentially, it is probably the same with the Macrocosm, or God—an underlying, basic UNITY, unknown and unknowable to finite minds, yet showing forth in manifestation an infinite series of Hierarchies of intelligent Beings, or Gods, each with its respective duty and function?

Peter realized, it seems, that Simon would experience little difficulty proving his point by the Bible. So, to meet the challenge, he took the position that the Scriptures have certain "falsehoods" in them, that these falsehoods were placed there as tests, and that in order to understand the meaning, one must know what is true and what false. How is this discrimination to be achieved, do we ask? The only way ordinary men can descry the true from the false, said Peter, is to have it revealed to them by a true prophet, among whom, evidently, he considered himself.

> And with us, indeed, who have had handed down from our forefathers the worship of the God who made all things, and also the mystery of the books which are able to deceive, he

> [Simon] will not prevail; but with those from amongst the Gentiles who have the polytheistic fancy bred in them, and who know not the falsehoods of the Scriptures, he will prevail much. . . . the falsehoods of the Scriptures are with good reason presented for a test.
>
> Then I Clement, hearing this, said: "How say you, my lord, that even the falsehoods of the Scriptures are set forth happily for the proof of men?" And he [Peter] answered: "The falsehoods of the Scriptures have been permitted to be written for a certain righteous reason, at the demand of evil." (*Homilies* III, iv, v.)

Some Christians and Jews of the present day may be surprised to know that, in the first century of our era, certain portions of the Bible were held to be the work of "impious imaginations." The following are the words of Peter:

> Assuredly, with good reason, I neither believe anything against God, nor against the just men recorded in the law, taking for granted that they [that is, those writings that speak *against* God and *against* just men] are impious imaginations. For, as I am persuaded, neither was Adam a transgressor, who was fashioned by the hand of God; nor was Noah drunken, who was found righteous above all the world; nor did Abraham live with three wives at once, who, on account of his sobriety, was thought worthy of a numerous posterity; nor did Jacob associate with four—of whom two were sisters—who was the father of the twelve tribes, and who intimated the coming of the presence of our Master; nor was Moses a murderer, nor did he learn to judge from an idolatrous priest—he who set forth the law of God to all the world, and for his right judgment has been testified to as a faithful servant. (*Homilies* II, lii.)

Adam's "transgressions," it will be remembered, are called attention to by the Lord God in several chapters of Genesis, and in Job 31: 33, we read: "If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom." As to Noah, there is the statement (Gen. 9: 21): "And he [Noah] drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent." Besides Sarah, Hagar and Keturah, Abraham's three wives at different periods of his long life, we learn (Gen. 25: 6) that he possessed a number of concubines: "But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts . . ." Concerning Moses, it is stated in Exodus 2: 11-12: "And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens; and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no

man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand."

It is not the Gnostic, or the Theosophist, who would criticize Peter for *questioning* the truth of things stated in the Scriptures. The Theosophists are a little amazed at times, however, at certain twentieth century attitudes which, holding that every word in the Bible is the unadulterated "Word of God," seem to make some present-day Bible students far more "Christian" than even the *Rock* (Peter) upon which the Church was built! The religious climate of the whole Western world, it may be, would be much healthier if men had been taught to question everything, the Bible included, in the light of conscience and an open mind. If this were done, it would be found that the Scriptures, both occidental and oriental, contain enough of inherent truth to sustain a sound and abiding faith, without the sacrifice of reason and common sense.

It is the opinion of some Theosophists, and also of a few open-minded Christians, that Simon Magus, called by Irenaeus the originator of Gnosticism, was beyond doubt one of the great spiritual leaders of his age and, at the same time, one of the most maligned characters in history. The ugly image we have been given is without question the work of early Christian partisans. To change this image overnight, of course, is impossible. It is possible, however, when hearing or reading the term *simony,* coined from Simon's name, and meaning "the purchase or sale of ecclesiastical preferment," to ask whether this charge was cunningly proposed to arouse righteousness? Also, remember the *sale of Indulgences,* against which Luther rebelled, wherein, *for a price,* remission of sins by an authorized Church representative was effected? One may ask himself, also, to what extent Protestantism, with its monthly and weekly campaigns and fund-raising appeals, is free from the taint of money? For it is only in the light of the blemishes upon one's own escutcheon that the man of good conscience will feel qualified to sit in judgment upon another. That Simon possessed strange and abnormal powers over Nature all men agree. Whether these powers were black or white, infernal or divine—who feels qualified to say, inasmuch as the men of this day are admittedly ignorant as to matters of this kind? For what, after all, is *miracle?*

Miracle, in one of its definitions, is "any wonderful or amazing thing." From this point of view, are we not daily and hourly surrounded by "miracles" of many kinds? Is it not a fact that some of

the most profound mysteries of life seem simple to us only because they are familiar? How many people feel the need, for example, of an explanation of how it is that water "dries up"? To a person not scientifically inclined, or not given to questioning, it seems perfectly understandable that water should evaporate, that a damp towel, placed upon a clothes line, should presently become dry. Has it not always done so? And the lighting of a fire by a flame: this is a thing wholly intelligible to the average individual, something that requires no explanation. But to the physicist, it is a complicated scientific process.

Or consider the phenomenon of photography: all that is required to take a good picture, in the minds of most people, is a camera, a film, and a subject worthy to be made of record. How it is that the lively mountain scene, thousands of miles away, manages to become impressed, perfect in detail and color, upon the sensitized film in the palm of one's hand, is a "mystery" few individuals stop to question. Here is a phenomenon just as "miraculous," perhaps, as many of the wonders recorded in Scripture *unless the process is comprehended*. (To Madame De Guerre, wife of the inventor of modern photography, the matter of taking a picture was not so simple. She had her husband committed to prison on the charge of insanity. He was attempting, she told the authorities, "to nail his shadow to the wall.") Modern kodachrome may be a sweeping advance over the tin-types of Monsieur De Guerre, but the mystery of how the mountain gets on the film remains for the untutored.

Soon after the Theosophical Movement was launched in 1875, and the existence of living Adepts with phenomenal powers over space, time, mind, and matter, was made known, a prominent English Theosophist living in India suggested a scheme for furthering the work of the Society. He wrote to one of the Mahatmas that if they would precipitate in London a copy of the Allahabad *Pioneer* on the day of publication, half of London would be converted to Theosophy. Needless to say, the Adepts rejected the offer. A portion of the Master's reply is here presented for the light it may shed upon the nature of human credulity:

> You say—half London would be converted if you could deliver them a *Pioneer* on its day of publication . . . Precisely because the test of the London newspaper would close the mouths of skeptics—it is unthinkable. See it in what light you will—the world is yet in its first *stage* of disenthralment if not develop-

> ment, hence—unprepared. Very true, we work by natural not supernatural means and laws. But, as on the one hand Science would find itself unable (in its present *state*) to account for the wonders given in its name, and on the other the ignorant masses would still be left to view the phenomenon in the light of a miracle; everyone who would thus be made a witness to the occurrence would be thrown off his balance and the results would be deplorable . . . The success of an attempt of such a kind as the one you propose, must be calculated and based upon a thorough knowledge of the people around you. It depends entirely upon the social and moral conditions of the people in their bearing on these deepest and most mysterious questions which can stir the human mind—the *deific* powers in man and the possibilities contained in nature. How many, even of your best friends, of those who surround you, who are more than superficially interested in these abstruse problems? You could count them upon the fingers of your right hand.

The "miracles" of every age and nation were possible through a knowledge of the universally diffused Magnetism, or Soul of the World—ignorantly called Ether by modern Science. Pythagoras taught his disciples that God is the universal Mind diffused through all things, and that this mind, by the sole virtue of its sameness, could be communicated from one object to another and be made to create all things by the will-power of man. Is it not evident that many of Jesus' miracles were accomplished through employment of this mysterious magnetic Force or Mind? Did he not feel loss of magnetism in the production of his *cures,* as when the woman who had "an issue of blood twelve years" touched his clothes?

> And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in body [magnetically] that she was healed of that plague.
>
> And Jesus immediately knowing in himself that virtue [magnetism] had gone out of him . . . said, Who touched my clothes? (Mark 5: 29-30.)

It was through Jesus' ability to direct the universal Magnetic Fluid, beyond doubt, that he could heal through "the laying on of hands" (Mark 5: 23)—even to raising those apparently dead, such as Jairus' daughter (Mark 5: 39-42). But among those of "unbelief," "he could do no mighty work" (Mark 6: 4-6)—that is to say, his magnetism could not be transmitted to negative, or unbelieving, minds. Why, except for aiding the flow of magnetism, did the Master offer the following advice to "the twelve:"

> And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits;

> And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse:
>
> But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.
>
> And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place. (Mark 6: 7-10.)

What can this mean but that, for the most successful control of the occult Magnetic Force, one should have no objects on his person —save a "staff," which, connecting the body with the earth serves as a conductor? Why should there be "no scrip," except for the well-known fact that the handwriting of each individual carries with it the magnetism of the writer? Why "no money," except that metals of all kinds either attract or repel; why "sandals" and only one coat, except for the need that the body be free of excess clothing, which, according to the nature of the materials worn, has its own magnetic affinities? And why, finally, should the disciples be commanded to "abide" in one place, and not move about, during their stay in each city, except that the room in which one lives becomes magnetically individualized, and is an aid to concentration, thought and proficiency in magic? "The corner-stone of MAGIC," said H. P. Blavatsky, "is an intimate practical knowledge of magnetism and electricity, their qualities, correlations, and potencies." (*Isis Unveiled* II, 589.)

It is the hope of the Theosophists that when the next cycle of occult phenomena begins to manifest in man some knowledge of the *laws* governing such manifestations will be present to help avoid the dangers of such practices as hypnotism, *glossalalia* and the "speaking in tongues," recently reported as arising among some of the Protestant sects (see *Saturday Evening Post,* May 16). The present cycle, according to Theosophy—2000 years from Jesus, 2500 from Buddha, and 5000 from Krishna—is pregnant with both danger and undreamed-of spiritual possibilities, one leading to mediumship and sorcery, the other to mental and moral balance and control. True Theurgy, or *Magic,* as practiced by many sects at the time of Jesus, belongs only to the wise, and to the "pure in heart." As a guide for the intuitive student, the last of the Three Objects of the present Theosophical Movement, was framed: "The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man."

PHILOSOPHOMENA

II

AND so, according to Simon, that blessed and imperishable (principle) concealed in everything, is in potentiality, but not in actuality, which indeed is He who has stood, stands and will stand; who has stood above in the ingenerable Power, who stands below in the stream of the waters, generated in an image, who shall stand above, by the side of the blessed and Boundless Power, if the imaging be perfected. For three, he says, are they that stand, and without there being three standing Æons, there would be no setting in order[1] of the generable which, according to them, moves on the water, and which is fashioned according to the similitude into a perfect celestial, becoming in no whit inferior to the ingenerable Power, and this is the meaning of their saying: *"Thou and I, the one thing; before me, thou; that after thee, I."*

This, he says, is the one Power, separated into the above and below, generating itself, increasing itself, seeking itself, finding itself, its own mother, its own father, its sister, its spouse; the daughter, son, mother, and father of itself; One, the Universal Root.

And that, as he says, the beginning of the generation of things which are generated is from Fire, he understands somewhat in this fashion. Of all things of which there is generation, the beginning of the desire for their generation is from Fire. For, indeed, the desire of mutable generation is called "being on fire." And though Fire is one, yet has it two modes of mutation. For in the man, he says, the blood, being hot and yellow—like fire when it takes form—is turned into seed, whereas in the woman the same blood (is changed) into milk. And this change in the male becomes the faculty of generating, while that in the female (becomes) nourishment for the child. This, he says, is "the flaming sword that is turned about to keep the way of the tree of life."[2] For the blood is turned into seed and milk; and this Power becomes mother and father, father of those that are born, and

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[1] Or adorning.

[2] *Genesis*, iii. 24.

mother of those that are nourished, standing in want of nothing, sufficient unto itself. And the tree of life, he says, is guarded by the fiery sword which is turned about, (which tree), as we have said (is) the seventh Power which proceeds from itself, contains all (in itself), and is stored in the six Powers. For were the flaming sword not turned about, that fair tree would be destroyed and perish; but if it is turned into seed and milk, that which is stored in them in potentiality, having obtained a fitting utterance,[3] and an appointed place in which the utterance may be developed, starting as it were from the smallest spark, it will increase to all perfection, and expand, and be an infinite power, unchangeable, equal and similar to the unchangeable Æon, which is no more generated for the boundless eternity.

Conformably, therefore, to this reasoning, for the foolish, Simon was a god, like that Libyan Apsethus; (a god) subject to generation and suffering, so long as he remained in potentiality, but freed from the bonds of suffering and birth, as soon as his imaging forth was accomplished, and attaining perfection he passed forth from the first two Powers, to wit heaven and earth. For Simon speaks distinctly concerning this in his *Revelation* as follows:

> To you, therefore, I say what I say, and write what I write. And the writing is this.
>
> Of the universal Æons there are two shoots, without beginning or end, springing from one Root, which is the Power invisible, inapprehensible Silence. Of these shoots one is manifested from above, which is the Great Power, the Universal Mind ordering all things, male, and the other, (is manifested) from below, the Great Thought, female, producing all things.
>
> Hence pairing with each other,[4] they unite and manifest the Middle Distance, incomprehensible Air, without beginning or end. In this is the Father who sustains all things, and nourishes those things which have a beginning and end.
>
> This is He who has stood, stands and will stand, a male-female power like the preëxisting Boundless Power, which has neither beginning nor end, existing in oneness. For it is from this that the Thought in the oneness proceeded and became two.
>
> So He[5] was one; for having her[6] in himself, he was alone, not however first, although preëxisting, but being manifested from

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[3] Also reason.

[4] Used in Xenophon (*Ana.* v. 4, 12) of two bands of dancers facing each other in rows or pairs.

[5] He who has stood, stands and will stand.

[6] Thought.

himself to himself, he became second. Nor was he called Father before (Thought) called him Father.

As therefore, producing himself by himself, he manifested to himself his own Thought, so also the Thought that was manifested did not make the Father, but contemplating him hid him —that is to say the Power—in herself, and is male-female, Power and Thought.

Hence they pair with each other being one, for there is no difference between Power and Thought. From the things above is discovered Power, and from those below Thought.

In the same manner also that which was manifested from them,[7] although being one is yet found as two, the male-female having the female in itself. Thus Mind is in Thought—things inseparable from one another—which although being one are yet found as two.

So then Simon by such inventions got what interpretation he pleased, not only out of the writings of Moses, but also out of those of the (pagan) poets, by falsifying them. For he gives an allegorical interpretation of the wooden horse, and Helen with the torch, and a number of other things, which he metamorphoses and weaves into fictions concerning himself and his Thought.

And he said that the latter was the "lost sheep," who again and again abiding in women throws the Powers in the world into confusion, on account of her unsurpassable beauty: on account of which the Trojan War came to pass through her. For this Thought took up its abode in the Helen that was born just at that time, and thus when all the Powers laid claim to her, there arose faction and war among those nations to whom she was manifested.

It was thus, forsooth, that Stesichorus was deprived of sight when he abused her in his verses; and afterwards when he repented and wrote the recantation in which he sung her praises he recovered his sight.

And subsequently, when her body was changed by the Angels and lower Powers—which also, he says, made the world—she lived in a brothel in Tyre, a city of Phœnicia, where he found her on his arrival. For he professes that he had come there for the purpose of finding her for the first time, that he might deliver her from bondage. And after he had purchased her freedom he took her about with him, pretending that she was the "lost sheep," and that he himself was the Power which is over all. Whereas the impostor having fallen in love

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7 The Middle Distance.

with this strumpet, called Helen, purchased and kept her, and being ashamed to have it known by his disciples, invented this story.

And those who copy the vagabond magician Simon do like acts, and pretend that intercourse should be promiscuous, saying: "All soil is soil, and it matters not where a man sows, so long as he does sow." Nay, they pride themselves on promiscuous intercourse, saying that this is the "perfect love," citing the text "the holy shall be sanctified by the . . . of the holy."[8] And profess that they are not in the power of that which is usually considered evil, for they are redeemed. For by purchasing the freedom of Helen, he (Simon) thus offered salvation to men by knowledge peculiar to himself.

For, he says, the Angels who made the world, instituted what they wished, thinking by such words to enslave all who listened to them. Whereas the dissolution of the world, they (the Simonians) say, is for the reasoning of their own people.

And (Simon's) disciples perform magical ceremonies and (use) incarnation, and philtres and spells, and they also send what are called "dream-sending" dæmons for disturbing whom they will. They also train what are called "familiars,"[9] and have a statue of Simon in the form of Zeus, and one of Helen in the form of Athena, which they worship, calling the former Lord and the latter Lady. And if any among them on seeing the images, calls them by the name of Simon or Helen, he is cast out as one ignorant of the mysteries.

While this Simon was leading many astray by his magic rites in Samaria, he was confuted by the apostles. And being cursed, as it is written in the *Acts,* in dissatisfaction took to these schemes. And at last he travelled to Rome and again fell in with the apostles, and Peter had many encounters with him for he continued leading numbers astray by his magic. And towards the end of his career going . . . he settled under a plane tree and continued his teachings. And finally running the risk of exposure through the length of his stay, he said, that if he were buried alive, he would rise again on the third day. And he did actually order a grave to be dug by his disciples and told them to bury him. So they carried out his orders, but he has stopped away until the present day, for he was not the Christ.

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[8] There is a lacuna in the text here.

[9] C. W. King calls these "Assessors." (*The Gnostics and their Remains,* p. 70.)

on the lookout

Raynor Johnson on Religion

A number of Theosophical students are cognizant of the semi-theosophical writings of Raynor C. Johnson, University of Melbourne physicist and philosopher, who has long interested himself in psychic phenomena, religion, and the theory of reincarnation. His first major work in these areas, *The Imprisoned Splendour,* was reviewed in Lookout for November, 1953; and it was at that time pointed out that Dr. Johnson, despite his evident interest in spiritualism, had considerable background in theosophic study. A present volume, *A Religious Outlook for Modern Man* (Hodder and Stoughton), attempts to bring the implications of Dr. Johnson's researches and speculations to bear on contemporary Christianity. In his introductory chapter Dr. Johnson writes:

> The only satisfactory solution of man's dilemma is to be found in his discovery of the enormous resources of his inner self. This is no easy quest or achievement, but it is a possible one, and the only satisfying one. In this way he may ride out the storms of this modern age with inner serenity, in the assurance that come what may, there is nothing really to fear. At such times religion should have something very important and relevant to say to man.
>
> I have formed the conviction that certain basic things in religion are true, important, and relevant to life. It is equally clear to me that all religions have gathered accretions in the form of theories and ideas, dogmas and doctrines which are unessential, which are sometimes false, and which generally obscure the simple and sublime truth.

Spiritualism Reconsidered

Since Dr. Johnson is attempting to renew the conclusions of *The Imprisoned Splendour* and subsequent writings for the benefit of a wider audience, he is obliged to summarize his own opinions in abbreviated form. In answer to the question, "What do you think of Spiritualism?" Johnson writes:

> I am not favourably impressed. The great majority of those who attend spiritualistic meetings and seances have no clear

appreciation of the mind's extra-sensory powers. They naïvely assume that all the phenomena are what they purport to be or what they wish them to be. This is far from being the case, and great critical discrimination is called for in the field of psychical phenomena. The possibilities of self-delusion and suggestion are almost limitless, and while I do not doubt that there are often genuine data, the sifting of them from the false, the classification of them and the interpretation of them is something which cannot be undertaken on a public platform or under conditions of a demonstration at a fixed time.

To the bereaved person who has a strong urge to explore this field in order to contact a loved one, I should say: make your journey of enquiry with carefully chosen mediums in private. Before you do so, learn all you can of the pitfalls. Keep your critical faculty alive and sensitive, and do not expect to get startling results immediately.

Reincarnation and Karma United

Although Dr. Johnson leans towards a faith in the unique quality of Jesus as a spiritual being, he finds much in Buddhism which indicates a sounder and more complete philosophic tradition than that represented by Christianity. Also, unlike spiritualists who invoke reincarnation on other worlds and planes as a promise of personal immortality, Dr. Johnson's view is integral with the perspective of karma. In answering various oppositions to the idea of reincarnation on the grounds of "justice," Dr. Johnson writes:

The soul may be faced with moral choices in which it failed before, but these may occur in a completely different setting. It may be assumed that breadth and variety of experiences are part of the soul's purpose. . . .

Many of the events and relationships which form the substance of the present life are rooted in trains of thought and action set going in a previous life, so that a person may be reaping the fruits of both happiness and sorrow which had their origin in an earlier life. Is this just, says the critic? If Jones of the twentieth century has no memories of Smith of the sixteenth century is it right that he should reap what the latter has sowed? Are they not from every viewpoint separate individuals? Our viewpoint is that both Jones and Smith are manifestations of one and the same soul, which is bigger and more fundamental than either personality. The consciousness of this soul will include the memories of both these personalities and any others put forth for the sake of experience. It is the growth of the soul which is enduring and important, and questions of justice must be in reference to this soul which is gathering a breadth of experience and distilling wisdom from it.

Rebirth as Education

Dr. Johnson continues:

> Sometimes the critic of reincarnation says, "But why here again? Is not the universe wide?" Certainly it is, but we suggest that the soul is drawn back to earth as the country of a man's childhood draws him back to see it again, however far afield he may have travelled. It is the place where friends and spiritual kindred may still be struggling, helping each other, and perhaps needing help. Earth is a magnet until a soul has progressed to the stage of no return, and its progress can take place better on higher levels.
>
> The logic of rebirth is perhaps somewhat like that of education. It is no good attempting tertiary education until a sufficient standard has been attained on the secondary level. To attempt it would be a waste of time. It seems that certain important and necessary qualities can only be acquired within the restrictions and limitations which a physical body provides. We can only learn fortitude and courage where the issue of events is uncertain. Kindness and compassion grow amid suffering when we share the common lot.

The theosophical reviewer is bound to repeat Lookout's earlier observations concerning Dr. Johnson's obvious unfamiliarity with H. P. Blavatsky's writings. But for one who has read chiefly in secondary and sometimes garbled presentations of H.P.B.'s original writings, this unusual physicist seems markedly perceptive.

Addressed to Christians

The endeavor to attune reincarnation philosophy to the Christian ear is evident not only in Dr. Johnson's method of treatment but also by an introduction by the Rev. Leslie D. Weatherhead—another reincarnationist—which shows that a number of church prelates hold Dr. Johnson in high esteem. Dr. Weatherhead admits that he is somewhat at odds with Dr. Johnson in respect to the value of public prayer, and that Dr. Johnson thinks less "highly of the Christian church" than the clergyman does. However, Dr. Weatherhead is deeply appreciative of the educative value for the Christian in *A Religious Outlook for Modern Man*. In his summation, Weatherhead remarks:

> I expect, like myself, the reader will find his mind almost startled by some of the daring thought of this book, but the truth cannot be undermined, and by relentlessly testing suggestive ideas by the touchstone, "Is this true or have I been content hitherto with conventional orthodoxy and what others have

said?", the truth, with all its convincing and self-authenticating power, will emerge.

With the universe opening before us as it is now doing, it would be as narrow-minded and self-important as the old astronomy, which thought the earth the centre of the universe, to suppose that no beings exist but ourselves in the innumerable galaxies. Are we to suppose that to us *alone* God revealed His nature by becoming one of us? May He not have become one of them? God may be not three in one but three million in one. How can we presume to run a creedal tape of human words around the mysterious Being who created the universe that makes our minds reel already, though we are only beginning to see an infinitesimal corner of it?

What we *can* do, and what this book helps us enormously to do, is to be ashamed of our intolerances, to see the childish weaknesses in our dogmatic creeds, to open our minds to new ideas, to recognise that many find the way to God along paths quite strange to us, and to test the value of a religion not by its theological pronouncements but by its power to make men loving, the insights with which it provides them so that they re-assess their scale of values and sit more loosely to temporal trivialities and anchor their souls in eternal realities.

Biography Concluded

In his *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant,* Arthur H. Nethercot concludes his biography which opened with *The First Four Lives of Annie Besant.* (See THEOSOPHY 49: 234.) Again there is the scholarly, well-documented approach. The picture is drawn of a woman of much talent and varied interests whose influence was felt in both Europe and India through the "causes" she supported. It is the author's conclusion that "in every case she ended as a leader in the cause she had adopted."

This volume, beginning in November, 1893, includes much of interest to a student of the Theosophical Movement, little of interest to the student of Theosophy. The maze of personalities and tumult of organizational strife may discourage one who is interested in Theosophy *per se.* However, the study does demonstrate what happens when an interest in the "psychic" outruns the "manasic." Mrs. Besant was introduced to Theosophy when she reviewed *The Secret Doctrine,* as related in the first volume. But subsequent interest in the psychic and occult, and the fact that "she was extremely susceptible to outside personal influences, particularly of a masculine nature," certainly accounts for many of the later difficulties, especially as concerns the history of the Theosophical Society.

An Appreciative Review

A thorough discussion of this second Nethercot volume, by J. M. Prentice, appears in the *Canadian Theosophist* for March-April. In Mr. Prentice's opinion, this book is "splendidly written and documented [and] commands the highest admiration and respect." It is pointed out, however, that Prof. Nethercot hardly does justice to William Q. Judge. The paragraphs dealing with this regrettable omission are worth quoting:

> These "Four Lives" (and many people would have preferred to have them described as "Facets" or "Segments") takes up the story of Mrs. Besant where it was left off in the previous volume, with Annie installed as a great Theosophical celebrity, but still somewhat overshadowed by the American, W. Q. Judge. It is soon made obvious that Nethercot has had his view of Judge "slanted" and he inclines to be less than fair in depicting him as one of the minor characters in Annie's development. As with Mme. Blavatsky, it is not always easy to follow courses of action; but the utter consistency of Judge's expositions of Theosophy, the luminous quality of his writings, have always stood out. It is well to remember that Mrs. Besant produced her own translation of the Bhagavad Gita to supplant that of Judge, and her volume *The Ancient Wisdom* was intended to replace Judge's *The Ocean of Theosophy* as an introduction to the Secret Doctrine itself, as well as to the volumes by Blavatsky bearing the same title.

The End of the Story

Mr. Prentice concludes:

> Nethercot brings out in his proper order the belated admission by Annie that she had been wrong in her attitude to Judge and in her acceptance at the time that he gave a misleading form to genuine messages from the Masters (he was never overtly accused of forgery, remember), but such an admission was made privately and never publicized at the time. This recalls to your reviewer a long interview which he had with G. R. S. Mead in 1916. Mead said he had often wondered if he had not gone astray in refusing to support Judge.

A Negative View

Note should be made of the assessment of William Q. Judge in relation to the Theosophical Movement. Professor Nethercot's reaction to H.P.B.'s "only friend" is a hostile one. Mr. Judge, he says, through the *Path* magazine, "commented sourly"; and his "machinations" are referred to. Yet his influence upon the Dublin Lodge is touched upon, and it was here that George W. Russell

("AE") was active. It is well to recall in this connection that in his *A Memoir of AE,* John Eglinton quotes Russell as saying: "Judge was the most impressive man I ever met, not by any air of dignity but simply from what he was." This represents a point of view held by many in the American Section as well.

A copy of a letter addressed to Mr. Nethercot respecting his evident acceptance of derogatory comments on Judge contains these sentences:

> After reading the first chapter of your book *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant* I feel obliged to protest your (I trust unconscious) defamation of the character of William Q. Judge.
>
> Are not the letters and works of Mr. Judge after all the best way to judge him, rather than by believing what his enemies said of him?

Growing Appreciation of Mr. Judge

The letter continues:

> Here is how the editor of the second volume of his letters, Mrs. Julia Keightley, introduces that volume (most of these letters were written during the very period when Mrs. Besant was going around the world challenging Judge's character): "In no single letter out of all these numbers—in no letter that the compilers have seen—is there a harsh or condemnatory word said of the authors of his trials. He accepts the bitter, the profound injustice done him without one word which could impugn the faith he held, the teachings he gave out. Surprise there is; annoyance once or twice at the waste of time, the irrational deeds and words. And then he turns him to that wise compassion which knows that it is not he who is wronged who is in truth the sufferer, but he who inflicts a wrong. . . . So it comes about that these letters breathe the compassion, the patience, the brotherliness their author lived to inculcate. Sorrow, indeed, he felt; but he put it bravely by. His great kind heart remained sound to the core."
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> Are you up on the latest developments in the Adyar Theosophical Society? The influence of William Q. Judge is on the rise. About three years ago at the annual convention of the American Theosophical Society (Adyar) at Wheaton, a large portrait of Mr. Judge was presented by the president, Dr. Henry Smith. There was unanimous agreement that it should be placed side by side with that of Mme. Blavatsky and Col. Olcott, at the Wheaton Headquarters, as one of the three chief Founders of the T.S. Many other examples of this change in attitude on the part of the Adyar T.S. could be cited.

A Congressman's Disappointment

According to the *Christian Century* for July 1, Rep. Frank J. Becker's (R., N.Y.) campaign for a prayer amendment is "beaten" but "he does not know it." As Lookout for August noted, many thoughtful Christians have come to realize that an abrogation of the First Amendment under the guise of "protecting religion" will simply subvert the essential protection of religion which the Constitution presently guarantees. The *Century* summarizes:

> When the hearings started, sentiment in Congress overwhelmingly favored some kind of action which would "put God back into the schools." The desire to reprove the Supreme Court for its rulings in the regents' prayer and Bible reading cases was general, especially since it appeared that political capital might be made out of the issue. Bishop Fulton Sheen, Daniel A. Poling and a variety of spokesmen pleaded passionately for the Becker or other proposals. Then the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church and other church assemblies spoke out and churchmen of another type had their innings before the committee. They made it clear that the real target of those who attacked the court was not the court but the First amendment.

A Political Issue Backfires

The *Century* continues:

> The vision of what havoc would ensue if the First amendment was weakened quickly cooled the heat of many protagonists of the Becker amendment. Credit for arousing the Protestant churches of the country must go to many church and synagogue leaders, but there will be general agreement that one of the most effective of the opponents of the Becker amendment was Dean Kelley, director of the department of religious liberty of the National Council of Churches. Leo Pfeffer of the American Jewish Committee was also influential. The big problem now is to see to it that the party conventions get the message that the exploitation of prayer for political ends is as profitless as it is indecent.

Presently, however, Rep. Becker is still "trying to obtain a total of 218 signatures to a discharge petition so he can get his prayer amendment bill out of the hands of the House judiciary committee and onto the floor of Congress." But the *Century* concludes with this informed prediction of a deserved failure:

> He now has 167 signatures. He may get a few more, but not the 51 he needs. Moreover, if he comes close to getting the 51, he will find that from ten to 30 of those whose names are on his

discharge petition will remove their names. Thus a truly remarkable reversal of public opinion took place while the Becker amendment and 146 other proposals of similar import were being considered by the judiciary committee. . . .

Ban on Cremation Relaxed by Pope

The New York *Times* for June 6 reports that Pope Paul has approved new regulations ending severe penalties on Roman Catholics who choose cremation for themselves or others. Without approving cremation or altering the church's preference for burial of the dead, the new document, sent to Catholic bishops by the Holy Office, states that those who choose cremation will no longer be proclaimed "public sinners" and denied the sacraments. The account reads:

> The document, it was reported, explained that the severe canonical penalties for cremation were imposed in 1886 in reaction to aggressive 19th century antireligious movements. These were said to have made cremation a symbol of positive rejection of belief in the Catholic doctrine of resurrection of the dead on the Day of Judgement.
>
> The new instruction specified that the penalties would still apply in the case of anyone who requested cremation as a form of defiance to the belief in the immortality of the soul and resurrection of the body.
>
> Church theologians now say that the cremation of a body would not prevent its resurrection at the command of an all-powerful divinity. It is acknowledged further that there are legitimate economic and hygienic reasons for cremation in some parts of the world where space for cemetery burial is limited.

As students of theosophical history will recall, the first cremation in the United States was held under the auspices of the Theosophical Society. Mr. Judge briefly summarizes the story in *Echoes from the Orient*: "Very soon after [the Theosophical Society] launched forth, its president, Col. H. S. Olcott, found a new member in Baron Henry Louis de Palm, who died and obligingly left his body to the Colonel to be cremated. The funeral was held at Masonic Hall, New York, and attracted great attention. It was Theosophical in its character. Col. Olcott presided, a Spiritualist offered an invocation and a Materialist read a service."

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